

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN
USDOCOSOUTH
USCINCEUR VAIHENGEN GERMANY
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 4040

LIMDIS--MILITARY ADDRESSES HANDLE AS SPECAT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, US
SUBJ: ECEVIT'S APPROACH TO HIS VISIT TO THE US

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT PREPARES FOR PRIMIN ECEVIT'S US
VISIT MAY 29-JUNE 5, WE HAVE SOME COMMENTS THAT MAY
HELP IN DEALING WITH HIM AND UNDERSTANDING HIS BEHAVIOR.
AS WE HAVE OFTEN OBSERVED, BULENT ECEVIT IS A VERY COMPLEX
MAN AND HIS PERFORMANCE IS NOT ALWAYS PREDICTABLE.
NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE HE WILL ARRIVE IN THE US WITH
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TWO MAJOR GOALS IN MIND: TO IMPROVE HIS AND TURKEY'S
WORLD IMAGE AND TO IMPROVE TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE US.

2. ECEVIT'S ROLE AS HONARY CHAIRMAN OF THE NATO SUMMIT
WILL GIVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO GAIN POSITIVE PUBLIC
EXPOSURE--BOTH ABROAD AND AT HOME--BUT ALSO TO TRY
TO MEND TURKEY'S STRAINED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ALLIANCE

IN GENERAL AND THE US IN PARTICULAR. IT IS POSSIBLE ECEVIT WILL STRIKE A HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC POSE BY ACCENTING THE WIDELY ACCEPTED TURKISH MYTHS THAT TURKEY HAS GIVEN MORE THAN IT HAS GOTTEN FROM NATO AND THAT NATO NEEDS TURKEY MORE THAN TURKEY NEEDS NATO. BUT WE THINK THOSE THEMES WILL BE IN THE BACKGROUND, WHILE THE DOMINANT TURKISH THEME WILL BE CONCILIATORY, BECAUSE ECEVIT KNOWS THAT TURKEY'S INTERESTS DICTATE A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US.

3. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT BEFORE, ECEVIT'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH HIS SERIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY BY FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESSES. SIMILARLY, FOREIGN POLICY FAILURES WOULD HURT, AND REGARDLESS OF THE BITTER EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO, FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE US-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE A FAILURE AS FAR AS MOST OF THE TURKISH PUBLIC IS CONCERNED. THEREFORE, IF ONLY BECAUSE IT COINCIDES WITH HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL NEEDS, ECEVIT WANTS TO IMPROVE TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE US.

4. SOME OBSERVERS OF ECEVIT DO NOT AGREE WITH THE ASSESSMENT THAT HE WANTS TO RESTORE THE US-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP. THEY BELIEVE THAT ECEVIT IS OPPOSED TO A CLOSE (AND DEPENDENT) RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND THAT HIS GOAL IS TO END THAT RELATIONSHIP--BUT TO DO SO IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE US WILL BE BLAMED. ECEVIT CAN THEN UTILIZE A NATIONALISTIC REACTION AGAINST THE US, BOTH TO REORIENT TURKISH

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FOREIGN POLICY AND TO SALVAGE HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL POSITION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS APPROACH IS ONE ECEVIT WILL TAKE BY CHOICE. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS AN OPTION HE WILL CONSIDER SERIOUSLY IF THE US RELATIONSHIP GOES SOUR.

5. RECONCILING HIS PRIMARY GOAL OF IMAGE-BUILDING WITH THE GOAL OF RESTORATION OF THE US-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP WILL TEST ECEVIT'S SKILL AS A PUBLIC PERFORMER. THIS WILL BE PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE PUBLIC OCCASIONS WHEN ECEVIT WILL BE TORN BETWEEN THE ROLES OF THE WORLD STATESMAN AND TURKISH POLITICIAN. POSITIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT NATO WILL NEED TO BE PHRASED VERY CAREFULLY TO AVOID APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS WITH HIS EARLIER CRITICISM OF THE UTILITY OF NATO AND HIS STATEMENTS THAT TURKEY SHOULD STRIKE A MORE INDEPENDENT POSE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. ON THE OTHER HAND, ECEVIT WILL NEED TO AVOID ANY INDICATION THAT TURKEY'S COMMITMENT TO THE ALLIANCE WILL BE DIMINISHED BY THE "NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT" OR BY WHATEVER DISARMAMENT INITIATIVES HE PROPOSES DURING HIS SPEECH AT THE SSOD.

6. WE SUSPECT ECEVIT WILL MAINTAIN THE DELICATE BALANCE NECESSARY TO PURSUE HIS PRIMARY GOAL WITHOUT SACRIFICING

THE OTHER. BUT THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT OF HOW HE WOULD CHOOSE
IF FORCED TO MAKE A PUBLIC CHOICE BETWEEN "INDEPENDENT"
TURKEY AND "DEPENDENT" TURKEY. MOREOVER, AS HIS
PERFORMANCE AT MONTREUX DEMONSTRATES, HE CAN OVERREACT
TO SLIGHTS OR IMAGED SLIGHTS WHEN HE IS UNDER PRESSURE.
AND HE WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE IN WASHINGTON AND NEW
YORK.
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